

U.S. Diplomat Zorthian Defects to Journalism

Barry Zorthian, U.S. mission spokesman in Saigon who waged a usually friendly counter-insurgency war with newsmen there for 52 months, has defected from the Government to journalism.

Although Zorthian would not comment on the report, it was learned yesterday that he would soon leave Federal service after 20 years to take a management post with Time magazine.

The 47-year-old Zorthian had been reported earlier as going to either the Fletcher School of Diplomacy at Tufts University or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Zorthian has held a variety of posts with the U.S. Information Agency and the Voice of America. But it was in Saigon from early 1964 that the Armenian-born Zorthian won his greatest prominence as spokesman for ambassadors

Henry Cabot Lodge, Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor and Ellsworth Bunker.

In Vietnam where the Administration's credibility gap yawned to its widest, Zorthian was credited by most newsmen with consummate skill in presenting the U.S. mission in the best light he could.

Zorthian is known to have wanted an ambassadorial post after his Saigon service, but began considering a variety of other offers when none became available.